DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 451 396 CE 081 554

TITLE	Lessons Learned in Starting and Running a Neighborhood Networks Center.
INSTITUTION	Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	1999-06-00
NOTE	29p.; Produced by HUD, Neighborhood Networks.
AVAILABLE FROM	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Neighborhood Networks, 9300 Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22031-1207. Tel: 888-312-2743 (Toll Free); Tel: 703-934-3230 (TTY). For full text: http://www.hud.gov/nnw/resourcesforcenters/nnwguide009.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; Basic Skills; *Community Centers; *Computer Literacy; Employment Potential; *Employment Services; *Job Search Methods; *Low Income Groups; *Neighborhood Improvement; Partnerships in Education; Program Development; Welfare Recipients
IDENTIFIERS	Tennessee (Chattanooga)

ABSTRACT

This guide shares information about setting up and operating Neighborhood Networks centers. (These centers operate in Department of Housing and Urban Development-assisted or -insured housing nationwide to help low-income people boost their basic skills and find good jobs, learn to use computers and the Internet, run businesses, improve their health and medical care, and access child care, transportation, and other services.) Chapter 1 highlights the 10 qualities of successful Neighborhood Networks centers (articulate goals; involve residents; rely on resident advisory committees to identify and achieve goals; identify barriers to success and develop solutions; plan ahead; develop tools to measure progress; tend to funding needs; build partnerships; hire the right staff; operate like a business). Chapter 2 profiles three centers that have developed sustainable partnerships, contributed to residents' education and job prospects, and engaged residents in centers' planning and programs: Wheatland Community Learning Center, Dallas, Texas; Martin Luther King Jr. Community Learning Center, Seattle, Washington; and Communities On Line, Inc. at Orchard Mews, Baltimore, Maryland. Chapter 3 describes two organizations that yield lessons about what works in neighborhood revitalization: City of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation. Chapter 4 provides lists of helpful organizations, publications, and Web sites. (Contains 44 resources.) (YLB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 451 396

LESSONS LEARNED IN STARTING AND RUNNING A NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS CENTER

JUNE 1999

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CE 081 554

This publication was developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to assist in the planning and development of Neighborhood Networks centers.

The guides in this series offer "how to" information on starting up a center, creating programs and identifying center partners; center and program profiles and a wealth of resources.

Neighborhood Networks is a community-based initiative established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 1995. Since then, hundreds of centers have opened throughout the United States. These centers provide residents of HUD-assisted and/or -insured properties with programs, activities and training promoting economic self-sufficiency. These guides contain examples of successful center initiatives and how you can replicate them.

To receive copies of this publication or any others in the series, contact:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Neighborhood Networks
9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031-1207

Neighborhood Networks Information Center
Toll-free (888) 312-2743
TTY: (703) 934-3230

All publications are available from the Neighborhood Networks website at:

www.neighborhoodnetworks.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Lessons Learned in Starting and Running:A Neighborhood Networks Center **1**

Introduction 1
How This Guide Is Organized 1

Chapter One: Ten Qualities of Successful Neighborhood Networks Centers **2**

Chapter Two: Neighborhood Networks Center Profiles **4**

Wheatland Community Learning Center: Dallas, TX 4
Martin Luther King Jr. Community Technology Center: Seattle, WA 9
Communities On Line, Inc., at Orchard Mews: Baltimore, MD 12

Chapter Three: Neighborhood Revitalization: A Bigger Picture **15**

The City of Chattanooga, TN 15
Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation: Washington, DC 17

Chapter Four: Resources **20**

Contact Information for Neighborhood Networks Centers 20

Endnotes **25**

Lessons Learned in Starting and Running A Neighborhood Networks Center

Introduction

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) launched the Neighborhood Networks initiative in 1995. Today, hundreds of centers are operating in HUD-assisted and/or HUD-insured housing nationwide. Neighborhood Networks centers are helping low-income people boost their basic skills and find good jobs, learn to use computers and the Internet, run businesses, improve their health and medical care, and access child care, transportation and other services.

This guide shares important information about how to set up and operate a center. It draws from the experience of Neighborhood Networks centers in several states, as well as two other organizations, with special lessons to convey. This guide is intended for property owners and managers who are considering opening centers or are in the process of creating them and may be of value to established centers looking to adjust or expand their programs.

No two Neighborhood Networks centers are alike. Some are housed in a single room; others use an entire apartment building. Some centers target one primary offering, such as job placement, while others offer an array of programs and services. Some centers have created partnerships with one or two local organizations; others have forged multiple institutional alliances. Despite the wide variety, however, nearly all Neighborhood Networks centers address similar issues as they develop and grow.

Most often, these issues revolve around deciding on the appropriate programs and services, generating financial support, involving residents, building partnerships, hiring staff and measuring progress.

How This Guide is Organized

Chapter One highlights the ten qualities of successful Neighborhood Networks centers.

Chapter Two presents profiles of three different centers which have developed sustainable partnerships, contributed to residents' education and job prospects, and successfully engaged residents in Neighborhood Networks centers' planning and programs.

- ❑ Wheatland Community Learning Center, Dallas, TX
- ❑ Martin Luther King Jr. Community Learning Center, Seattle, WA
- ❑ Communities On Line, Inc. at Orchard Mews, Baltimore, MD

Chapter Three describes two organizations that yield other valuable lessons about what works in neighborhood revitalization.

- ❑ City of Chattanooga, TN
- ❑ Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation

Chapter Four provides a list of organizations, resources and contact information that may be helpful in establishing and operating Neighborhood Networks centers.

Chapter One

Ten Qualities of Successful Neighborhood Networks Centers

The Neighborhood Networks centers profiled in this guide are examples of successful centers. To insure your center's success, you should:

- **Articulate goals**. The majority of model centers outlined goals before establishing operation. Sharing these goals with residents and other community organizations enabled the centers to remain focused and gain community support for its mission.
- **Involve residents**. Residents are a good source of information and assistance. Many model centers survey residents to determine their needs before developing programs and services.
- **Rely on resident advisory committees to identify and achieve goals**. Residents who participate in the planning process often volunteer in center activities and raise the participation rate of others.
- **Identify barriers to success and develop solutions**. Development isn't a smooth process, and growth often proceeds in stages, with the greatest growth occurring when an organization overcomes a hurdle. Each of the model centers has confronted and overcome challenges to success.
- **Plan ahead**. The highlighted centers spent time planning how to form partnerships, attract residents and create programs. Planning helped the centers set priorities, link goals to offerings and find funding.
- **Develop tools to measure progress**. Many of the model centers developed tools to determine whether or not they're achieving their goals and if those goals remain relevant over time. Evaluation tools can be simple comparisons of anticipated activities and actual programs – or a more complex survey of participants and partners.
- **Tend to funding needs**. Centers need space, staff, equipment and materials – most of which requires funds. The model centers raised funds using different strategies, including in-kind donations from partners to tapping property operating funds to finance programs. Some of these centers took time to research available resources. Research ranged from low-cost strategies of brainstorming sessions and walking through the neighborhood to sophisticated Internet searches. Properties with minimal debt had an easier time developing and sustaining a center. Yet even troubled properties can work in partnership with a financially sound organization to obtain space and develop programs for a Neighborhood Networks center.
- **Build partnerships**. Partnership building, while time-consuming, has played a key role in the development and growth of model centers. Local organizations are a good source of funding, volunteers and materials. Partners can also help promote center activities. Conferences with potential partners and national training institutes have helped organizations identify appropriate partners with similar goals. In some cases, finding one or two strong partners is a more effective strategy than trying to enlist multiple smaller partners.
- **Hire the right staff**. Centers can increase participation and decrease costs by hiring staff who are experienced in using computers and other center equipment and who can easily interact with residents.

- **Operate like a business**. A professional approach to recordkeeping and other operations helps increase the center's credibility for partners and residents. As the model centers demonstrate, participants, too, gain valuable practical experience from a businesslike environment.

Chapter Two

Neighborhood Networks Center Profiles

Wheatland Community Learning Center: Dallas, TX

The Wheatland Community Learning Center (WCLC) serves 2,000 residents at five Dallas properties. The two-story center has been operating since 1996. Center staff estimates that about 300 residents used the center in 1998 to pursue their General Equivalency Degree (GED) and take courses in basic computer competencies, life skills and business etiquette. Center staff and partners also provide job training and placement services.

Lessons Learned:

- Initial resident surveys helped ensure center activities matched residents' interests.
- Center policies, such as codes of conduct and limited tolerance for absences, gave residents a "real world" experience.
- Providing space at the center for partners to operate on-site programs expanded the available offerings and increased residents' use of programs and services.

Background

In the early 1990s, crime and violence plagued Wheatland Terrace and the four neighboring properties. Gangs ruled the streets. Drug dealing, prostitution and drive-by shootings were common. Among the incidents was the torching of the Wheatland property management office.

In 1996, the Texas HUD office placed Wheatland Terrace in disposition. Security guards monitored the property around the clock during renovation, which included the rehabilitation of one building to house a Neighborhood Networks center. While seeking a buyer for the property, HUD issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) asking a nonprofit owner to complete the renovation and manage the Neighborhood Networks center. Dean Learning Center, with 50 years of experience in Dallas, was awarded the contract in October 1996. The Wheatland Community Learning Center began operation soon thereafter.

The five multifamily properties served by the Neighborhood Networks center have 1,012 units and 2,530 residents. About 50 percent of the residents are 18 and younger. Half the adults have not graduated from high school and half are unemployed. The majority of those who do have jobs are underemployed. Single mothers represent 87 percent of parents in the five buildings. African Americans represent 95 percent of the residents.

Wheatland Community Learning Center (WCLC)

Wheatland's Neighborhood Networks center is housed on the Wheatland Terrace grounds. The first floor includes classrooms, library, break room, community room and three computer labs with 20 terminals. On the second floor are offices and conference rooms. Four full-time employees work at the center. Classes are offered in 10-week sessions with two intervening weeks for registration. Course offerings include Keyboarding and Introduction to Computers, Learning Windows 95, Microsoft Word and Excel, GED, business etiquette, life skills, and computer training for senior citizens.

The center also provides space for local nonprofits to conduct programs. Operating on-site are Girls, Inc., and the Child and Family Guidance Center which offers counseling and therapy. Other on-site programs include the Latchkey Program and Truancy Intervention.

Finding Financial Support

The initial HUD proposal required that some of Wheatland Terrace's operating overhead be used to support the Neighborhood Networks center. With minimal property debt, Wheatland Terrace had the resources to help fund the center. The center spent $150,000 during the first four months for startup and staffing, and $150,000 each year thereafter for operating costs, equipment, furniture, wiring, telephone, copy machines, fax operation and supplies for the kitchen, break room, offices and classes.

Wheatland Community Learning Center is exploring support from foundations, corporations and other independent funding sources. The WCLC executive director is approaching foundations and corporations.

Determining What to Offer

Wheatland Community Learning Center surveyed residents in person and through the management companies of the five properties that the center serves. Center staff used the survey results to create goals for the center.

Lesson: Articulate Goals

The Wheatland Community Learning Center surveyed residents to learn about their needs. The answers helped staff identify program areas. Resident needs included: computer skills, training, child care, transportation, education and job assistance.

During the goal-setting process, staff realized that certain programs needed to be in place before others. For example, many residents needed child care and transportation to participate in center classes or travel to educational programs and jobs. The center's location on a city bus line and on-site programs provided by partners solved many of the transportation issues. Child care, however, proved more challenging.

Overcoming the Child Care Obstacle

Bill Dean, the center's first executive director, found the absence of child care to be a critical barrier to resident participation in center activities. He worked with the nearby South Port School to provide care for residents' children. South Port had existing space and staff in place to handle the children but the school needed a reason to work with Wheatland. Discussions between the center and South Port School focused on the likelihood that parents would continue to use the child care provider once they found jobs.[1] South Port agreed to provide 25 free spaces for children of residents who participated in center programs.

Lesson: Identify Barriers and Develop Solutions

Wheatland staff identified the lack of child care as a significant barrier to resident participation. Wheatland overcame this obstacle by creating a partnership with a school that offered free child care for center participants.

Attracting Partners

With transportation and childcare programs in place, Wheatland staff turned to program development. The center contacted community organizations with programs responding to needs identified in the resident surveys and hosted a community conference for these groups, thereby attracting the interest of potential partners. Wheatland offered the nonprofit organizations free use of a desk, telephone and center equipment in exchange for conducting programs at the center. As a result of this conference, residents gained on-site access to educational, social and vocational programs. Partners had a site to reach targeted audiences. And the center gained volunteer staff and community commitment.

After the conference, many nonprofit organization's posted staff at the center. In addition to Girls, Inc., and the Child and Family Guidance Center, the Dallas Public Library helped organize a library for the center and film students at Mountain View Community College created a center marketing video.

Partners with staff at the center noticed immediate benefits. A representative from one organization working to help children stay in school said that having easy access to residents made a big difference. "It's a lot easier for us because we're able to work for [residents] in a place where maybe they feel more comfortable," the staffer said.[2]

Involving Residents in Real Decisions

The Wheatland center relies on a resident advisory board to help make decisions for the center. The center's director observed that participation in center programs increased when residents became involved in the advisory board. Board members learn how to create and use an agenda, how to write bylaws and how the board's decisions affect other board members, residents, the property management organization, owners and the community.

Staff found the following steps contributed to the active participation of resident board members:

- ❑ Hold monthly meetings and include significant issues on the agenda;
- ❑ Educate board members about the board's purpose and scope; and
- ❑ Provide board members with significant responsibility to make important decisions for the center and its participants.

Every month, staff present issues to board members and suggest possible outcomes of decisions. Board members decide on actions and work with staff to put new policies and programs in place.

Simulating a "Real World" Experience

The resident board helped Wheatland center staff develop a code of conduct in early 1997. This code encouraged participants to use the center to practice "being in the real world." For example, participants who arrive late to class are counted absent and encouraged to discontinue the course after a certain number of absences. The code of conduct proved to be an important success factor for residents who responded to center programs with increased respect and seriousness of purpose.

Lesson: Operate Like a Business

Wheatland staff realized that operating the center like a business helped residents adapt to business practices. Residents are accountable for all absences and tardiness. This practice fosters respect for center programs. Good attendance habits help prepare residents for job and education requirements.

The office technology class offers additional "real world" training, enabling students to practice business skills. The class includes sessions on business and telephone etiquette, proper use of office equipment, accurate recordkeeping and development of effective business correspondence.

Graduates of the office technologies class can participate in an internship program at a nearby property management office. Interns work 20 hours per week for one of the five properties served by the center. Interns usually do not work for the property where they reside. The internship helps residents learn about office leasing, accounting, bookkeeping and handling resident complaints.

The center requires participants to complete a life skills class designed and taught by Executive Director Kim Williams. The course uses Steven Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* to help residents plan personal goals, develop career plans, learn strategies to help budget, manage time effectively and reduce stress.

Establishing Goals

The center developed annual goals linked to center activities. For example, one goal is a target for center participants to receive their GED. Another set a goal for the number of center participants who would complete computer classes and type 20 words per minute. A third goal recommended reading requirements. Center staff uses goals to measure resident and center accomplishments.

Lesson: Create Tools to Measure Progress

Center staff used information provided from the initial resident surveys to develop goals for the center. By making the goals very specific, the center could evaluate progress at the end of the year. The center also created a tool to measure participation.

For 1998, the center established these goals to help track progress:

- ❑ 150 residents taking center classes;

- 40 residents placed in employment;
- 75 residents participating in Child and Family Guidance;
- 15 residents attending Focus Center for Learning; and
- 75 residents in Girls, Inc.

The center also measures its progress by a tracking tool called "participation opportunities." One participation opportunity occurs when a resident completes a class or center program. During 1997, 275 residents used the center and registered about twice as many participation opportunities. Staff estimate that an increase to 300 residents active at the center will translate to about 700 participation opportunities, the 1998 goal.

Assessing the Benefits

- **Residents**. For residents, participating in a Neighborhood Networks program can be a life changing experience. Both center staff and residents noted this. One resident appreciated the easy access to center activities. "I couldn't learn computers anywhere else except maybe the community college," he said.[3] The proximity of the center to this resident's apartment enabled him to gain valuable skills while spending no more than two or three hours a day away from his son.
- **Property Owners**. The Neighborhood Networks center helps owners gain a competitive edge in the marketplace. Owners also benefit from the center's positive effect on residents, which is reflected in better care of the property and an increased ability to pay rent on time. However, Wheatland's center director noted that since the center's activities are "far from the world" in which owners operate, some do not recognize the value of Neighborhood Networks centers.
- **Property Managers**. Managers see the center's effect on residents daily. To engage manager interest, Wheatland center staff hold a competition among the property managers to determine who can refer the most residents to the center. The winning management teams receive breakfast in their offices prepared by center staff.
- **Partners**. Interacting with the center has helped some partner organizations achieve their own missions. When the center offered office space and easy access to young residents, Communities in Schools dispatched an employee to conduct programs at the site. The nonprofit found that center programs helped residents, while allowing the organization to help more children stay in school.

  All organizations involved with the center receive certificates of appreciation. Many of these organizations post the certificates on their walls. The certificates help educate clients and customers about the organization's community outreach, while providing free advertising for the center.
- **Community**. The community has experienced marked transformation since the center's creation. Crime is down, a community spirit is prevalent among residents and property grounds are noticeably cleaner. Center staff intentionally waited to seek support from the broader community until results were evident. The center's director explained that this approach generated support when center programs were in place and showing progress. Early success at the center encouraged other community organizations to get involved in center programs and events.
- **Area Neighborhood Networks Centers**. The center encourages its partners to get involved with nearby Neighborhood Networks centers. Wheatland staff have been meeting with management of area centers to plan strategies, conduct joint fundraising efforts and plan shared public relations activities. These meetings help smaller centers access the resources available to larger centers. Both large and small centers often learn from one another in these exchanges.

Transferability

The Wheatland Community Learning Center was designed to be replicated. Center staff have helped nearby Neighborhood Networks centers incorporate Wheatland's code of conduct, establish policy procedures and develop forms. Also, they have guided other centers in setting up and processing participant applications for center programs.

Wheatland's ability to use excess operating funds from the apartment complex to support the center is not typical. However, existing and developing centers can use Wheatland's partnership strategies to think beyond their own resources and consider collaborating with organizations in their community. Those owners with extensive deferred maintenance or limited resources can conduct outreach to community organizations for support.

Summary

Staff at the Wheatland Community Learning Center identified the following activities as critical to success.

- ❑ Conduct a comprehensive resident survey to understand what residents expect from the center.
- ❑ Respond to resident needs directly and through partnerships.
- ❑ Create a resident advisory board and allow board members to make all critical center decisions.
- ❑ Model the center's structure after the environment in which residents will eventually work.
- ❑ Offer programs that challenge residents while requiring a high level of personal commitment and performance.
- ❑ Educate participants about center policies and enforce center rules. Establish grievance policies.
- ❑ Consider the scale of the center. A center serving 200 residents will need fewer computers, fewer staff and a smaller space than a center serving 2,000 residents.

Martin Luther King Jr. Computer Learning Center: Seattle, WA

The Martin Luther King (MLK) Jr. Community Technology Center serves a 120-unit HUD-assisted multifamily apartment complex on Seattle's south side. The center offers classes on job skills and computer training, GED and English as a Second Language (ESL), and a wide array of youth activities and study programs. A quote from Winston Churchill on the center's website underscores the center's commitment to offering an enriching environment: "We shape our dwellings and afterwards our dwellings shape us."

Lessons Learned:

- Hire a central employee with technical and educational skills to serve as the motivating force for participation by partners, donors and volunteers.
- A successful center can operate with only a few computers.
- Secure adequate funding to cover annual operating expenses.

Background

The MLK Apartments management office once averaged three calls to 911 a day, according to Elridge Morgan, the former manager who now directs the Neighborhood Networks center. The center offers a safe haven where residents can learn English, study for degrees, gain employment skills and receive help applying for jobs. Soon after the center was established, conditions at the complex improved.

The City of Seattle was on the verge of demolishing the MLK Apartments in 1992. That's when the property management collaborated with community partners to renovate the building. New trellises, gabled roofs, wrought iron fencing, playgrounds and picnic tables contributed to the external renovation, while the new community technology center helped expand work and educational opportunities for residents. The Aerospace Machinists Local District 751 owns the property and Quantum Management Services helps manage the apartment complex.

In September 1995, a coalition of public and private partners[4] installed eight computers in a renovated maintenance room. Software programs in math, reading, writing, history and geography provided online education for a range of age levels. Center staff installed Microsoft Office to help residents enhance business skills, assist with homework and provide professional desktop publishing of resumes. Internet access allows residents to conduct job searches via the World Wide Web.

Today, a full-time director supervises a coordinator, resident volunteers and Service Learning students from local high schools at the center. More than 25 children and 15 adults use the lab regularly. Participants can take advantage of the center's Earn a Computer Program which awards computers to residents who complete specified computer courses taught at the center. Volunteers also are eligible to earn a computer after completing participation in center activities.

Securing Financial Support

Quantum Management Services received $5.9 million from HUD to renovate the complex. The managers used $25,000 of this grant to purchase equipment, furniture, computers and software for the computer learning center. The property managers have included the center's ongoing costs in the property's operating budget and estimate the annual costs at $35,000. The budget includes expenses for two full-time staff, software, hardware upgrades, center utilities and occasional maintenance. The center relies on the technician skills of Center Director Eldridge Morgan to maintain and repair computers.

Planning the Center

Eldridge Morgan's passion, vision, technical expertise and strong relationships with residents underlie the MLK computer center's success. Unlike the two other centers described in this Guide, MLK did not rely on resident surveys to determine center goals. Instead, the Seattle center launched programs after only a brief planning period. At times, center development progressed in a "keep trying until it works" fashion. In April 1998, Morgan received the William H. Lucy Award from the Coalition of Black Trade Unions (CBTU) for meritorious service in the area of Community Service.

When the center opened its doors in 1995, Morgan initially served double duty as property manager and center director. He found, however, that he often had to sacrifice one role to accomplish the other. When the management company offered him a choice in 1996, Morgan opted for center director.

Lesson: Hire the Right Staff

A key employee, such as a property manager, who is familiar with resident issues can play a critical role early in the process of developing a center. At some point, the center may consider asking staff to work full time on center activities. When the demands of a growing center required a full-time commitment at MLK, the property manager became the center director and gave up his management duties.

The MLK center director serves double duty as a technical computer expert. He has helped save the center money by identifying computer needs and repairing computers.

Benefits

- **Residents**. The center averages two job placements a month. Five families used the center's classes and Internet job searches to find jobs with high enough salaries to move out of Section 8 housing and into market rent apartments. Other residents are making enough money to buy homes.
- **Property Owners**. The Aerospace Machinists Union notes that in addition to preventing demolition of the apartments, the renovation and the center's opening have reduced crime and drug proliferation. Once at 50 percent occupancy during the renovation, the property now has a five-year waiting period for units. The computer learning center serves as an amenity, much like apartment tennis courts or swimming pools.
- **Property Managers**. As a result of the successful turnaround of the MLK Apartments, the City of Seattle invited the property managers to manage a city-owned housing complex as well. The Seattle Police Department advocated for this unusual request.
- **Partners**. Partners ranging from a supermarket chain to a basketball team have supported the center through in-kind donations, volunteers and services. In return, the MLK Community Technology Center publishes the partner organizations' logos on the center's website.
- **Community**. According to Center Director Morgan, the center has helped "bring the community closer together." For example, residents once feared police more than drug dealers; now many residents participate in a neighborhood block watch.

Lessons Learned

- **Don't overplan; experiment**. You can open a computer lab with one computer. You don't have to wait until you have "top-of-the-line" equipment.
- **Be firm with rules and regulations**. If you make an exception for one person, others will demand that you make the same exception for them. This is especially critical when an organization receives federal funds and must abide by regulations that prohibit discrimination.
- **Keep logs and track daily maintenance of computers**. Not only will details become overwhelming without daily checks and balances, but computers will not operate properly without appropriate maintenance.

Transferability

The MLK Center has served as a prototype for other centers in the Seattle metropolitan area. Morgan helped nearby Royal Hills in Renton secure an Internet account with Northwest Links, whose server MLK also uses. A Vista volunteer at MLK helped set up a Neighborhood Networks center at the Chateau Apartments. The center's English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher helped develop an ESL program at Bryant Manor and soon became an ESL instructor at the nearby center.

Morgan cautioned that security issues can prevent effective replication. He suggests that centers post security guards near the property's main entrance and use some form of security lighting system in the complex. These actions can help diminish vandalism and robbery.

Sustainability

The center was awarded an AmeriCorps Vista volunteer to identify needs, procure center resources and build partnerships to promote sustainability. By developing a database of contacts, meeting with potential partners and consistently following-up with contacts, the volunteer helped establish partnerships with organizations ranging from the 7-11 convenience store to the Seattle Mariners. He used the center's PowerPoint software to create a slide presentation as a marketing aid when meeting with potential partners. He also developed a brochure highlighting center successes.

Summary

The MLK Community Technology Center is a national model largely as a result of the passion and vision of the center director.

- ❑ Focus staff to work on specific areas that include fundraising, instruction and resident and community outreach.
- ❑ Build a volunteer base from partner organizations, residents and government programs, such as VISTA and AmeriCorps.
- ❑ Use incentives, such as "earn your own computer" awards for completed assignments.
- ❑ Incorporate programs that respond to residents' needs. MLK created an ESL class in response to the property's large immigrant population.
- ❑ Develop a database of existing donors and look for ways to involve them in center activities.
- ❑ Continually seek new donors and partners.

Communities On Line, Inc., at Orchard Mews: Baltimore, MD

Communities On Line, Inc. serves Orchard Mews, a 101-unit HUD-assisted property; McCullough Homes, a public housing complex with 1,000 units; and Work Focus 2000, a welfare-to-work program of the Baltimore Urban League. Other community members can access the center's services for a minimal fee. The center provides classes in computer literacy an anticipates expanding offerings to include classes in Microsoft Word and Excel. The organization has been assigned to the Baltimore Urban League's (BUL) help desk troubleshooting computer technology department. Orchard Mews employs a part-time substance abuse counselor and a full-time nurse to assist with residents' health needs. The property received a 1998 John J. Gunther Blue Ribbon Best Practice Award from HUD for its health care demonstration program.

Lessons Learned:

- ❑ Take time to plan programs for the center.
- ❑ Involve partners and residents in the planning process.
- ❑ Cultivate at least one strong partnership.

Background

In 1995, Angela Wickham, the property manager at Orchard Mews, began exploring ways to help residents develop competitive job skills. She met with Charles Wilson, HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinator for Maryland, who encouraged her to consider opening a Neighborhood Networks center at Orchard Mews. During the next two years, Wickham attended Neighborhood Networks seminars, visited properties with centers and, with Wilson, began speaking to potential partners.

Lacking financial resources and space for a center, Wickham reached out to the Baltimore Urban League because they owned the building that housed AMICO, Orchard Mews' property management company. The Baltimore Urban League and its executive director, Roger Lyons, offered early and ongoing support for the center.

Lesson: Planning is Key

Communities On Line, Inc. met weekly to plan programs with residents, managers, HUD staff and partners.

Invitations were extended to representatives from Baltimore's City Housing Authority, owners of McCullough Homes, Congressman Elijah E. Cummings (D-MD), and Reverend Groves, pastor of the Canaan Baptist Church, to participate in the center planning process. Each played an important role in developing Communities On Line, Inc.

With partners in place, Communities On Line, Inc. broadened the planning process by distributing meeting flyers to residents and other community members. A core group of residents met at the Baltimore Urban League with property managers, partners and HUD staff on a weekly basis to develop programs, determine staffing, outline lesson plans and create curricula.

Communities On Line, Inc.

Both of the properties served by the Communities On Line, Inc. computer center are located near downtown Baltimore, in an area characterized by low-income housing, low- to moderate-market rents and above-average crime rates.

Lesson: Partnerships Help Center Grow

Communities On Line, Inc. received computers and other equipment through its partnership with the Baltimore Urban League. Funds from an Urban League grant helped purchase new computers for the center to supplement those initially donated by HUD. Partners continue to support the center.

The computer center occupies one room of the Baltimore Urban League building. One full-time Urban League employee assists with curriculum development and classroom instruction. Resident volunteers help with all other center tasks, which include answering telephone calls, registering class participants, purchasing supplies, tutoring and responding to correspondence.

The center held its grand opening in August 1997 and began holding computer classes in April 1998. During 1998, the center offered two computer classes – one

during the day and a second in the evening – as well as an open computer lab between classes for participants to practice. Class sessions ran for four weeks.

The resident advisory group participated in the first pilot course. The group's feedback helped the paid Urban League instructor adjust the course to meet residents' needs. Partners and residents used the interim period after the pilot course to develop programs, create class curricula and conduct outreach.

Raising Financial and Other Supports

The Baltimore Urban League provides many in-kind donations to Communities On Line, Inc., including state-of-the-art computer room, materials and one employee to staff the center. To minimize administrative costs, the center opened classes to the community for a fee of $25 per class. These fees help pay for center items such as computer disks, paper and class folders.

Communities On Line, Inc. is working to achieve nonprofit status as a 501(c)3 organization. Once the center completes this process, staff will begin to apply for grant money.

Identifying Resident Needs

In addition to holding community meetings, the Communities On Line, Inc. organizing committee conducted resident surveys. At Orchard Mews, this entailed going door-to-door and speaking with residents. Because of the large number of residents at McCullough Homes, a mail-in survey assessed residents' experience with computers and interest in the center. The organizing committee used the surveys to establish goals to expand computer literacy, to provide education, advocacy and job training to center clients, and to increase participant involvement in community activities.

Lesson: Resident Involvement Plays Important Role

Communities On Line, Inc. benefited from initial surveys identifying the level of resident computer knowledge. Surveys revealed that residents had basic computer literacy needs that included keyboard use and running office and educational software. The center used survey results to establish goals for the center that helped increase residents' comfort level with computers.

Benefits

- **Residents.** The center's first two computer classes have been at capacity and residents have taken ownership of the center. Resident association members help interview and train center volunteers, assist with class development, respond to on-site and telephone inquiries, conduct registrations and tutor students. Under the guidance of the Baltimore Urban League's director of technology, the residents have upgraded the computers used by Urban League staff, which asked Communities On Line, Inc. participants to redesign the Baltimore Urban League's website.
- **Property Owners and Managers.** As one of the primary initiators of the center, Orchard Mews Property Manager Angela Wickham has played an important role in the success of the center. She and the property owners have benefited from residents' enthusiasm for center programs and from area organizations that have become involved in center activities.
- **Partners.** The center has helped unite and foster relationships with many community organizations around similar issues. Wickham noted that local organizations are beginning to work together to solve a range of community problems.
- **Community.** Many community groups participated in a city parade along Druid Hill Avenue to celebrate the center's grand opening. Marching bands joined area organizations, residents, elected officials, HUD officials, a church choir and singing groups. The city provided a fire truck and staff to assist with parade logistics. Community members have been taking advantage of the center's computer classes, which are available to them for a minimal fee.

Lessons Learned

- ❑ Ensure residents are involved and supporting center activities.
- ❑ Allow time to plan. After two years of planning, the Communities On Line, Inc. center became operational.
- ❑ Set clear center goals and focus on those goals daily.
- ❑ Schedule center programs, determine the center's hours of operation and identify partners.
- ❑ Hold regular meetings of a core group of residents, partners, center volunteers and staff to learn about ongoing center issues. Determine solutions and assess the daily impact of bylaws, policies and programs on participants.

Transferability

Existing and newly developing centers can follow many of the Communities On Line, Inc. center's planning activities. Wickham suggests that centers begin by involving their "best resource," residents, in the process. "Do not make the mistake of thinking for them" or "calling all the shots and asking later, 'What do you think?'" she says.

Neighborhood Networks centers may benefit from enlisting one or two effective partners, such as the alliance between Communities On Line, Inc. and the Baltimore Urban League. Such partnerships require time and hard work. Communities On Line, Inc. first researched the missions of local organizations to find a good match. Then, staff contacted the leaders of potential partner organizations to arrange meetings. These meetings explored whether the goals of the organization matched the center's goals. Since resident participation is an important part of Neighborhood Networks, centers may ask whether partners will allow residents to take the initiative in projects. Organizations that work on an equal level with residents help residents and partner organizations learn from each other.

Choose partners carefully: quality is often more important than quantity. Ask the question: What can the center offer this partner in return for the partner's services or products?

The Baltimore Urban League has invited residents to programs and activities beyond the center's scope. For example, children at Orchard Mews and McCullough Homes can attend the Baltimore Urban League's summer math and science lab at no cost and older residents are invited to participate in special Urban League presentations and seminars.

Summary

The strength of Communities On Line, Inc. is its strong collaborative efforts involving Orchard Mews Apartments, McCullough Homes, the Baltimore Urban League, HUD and U.S. Representative Elijah E. Cummings (D-MD). The center focuses on expanding computer technology. Orchard Mews supplements this training with additional resident programs, including on-site health care and entrepreneurial training.

- ❑ Involve all members of the community in the center planning process. Collaborative efforts help increase attendance at center events and classes.
- ❑ Allow time for democratic planning processes. Consensus-building can require weeks and months of meetings before the center is operational.
- ❑ Analyze residents' needs and required resources before seeking funding or space.
- ❑ Smaller spaces are soon outgrown. Consider creating a slightly larger center than intended to allow for future growth.
- ❑ Always address the "basics" in any center class. For example, computer classes should include lessons in using the keyboard and the mouse.

Chapter Three

Neighborhood Revitalization: A Bigger Picture

The City of Chattanooga, TN and the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation offer valuable lessons that may be useful in helping Neighborhood Networks centers anchor their communities' renewal.

Chattanooga's story is about how residents can transform their community by working together to overcome the same challenges that face HUD-assisted and HUD-insured apartment properties. The Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation story illustrates how a strong national partner can give a substantial boost to community-based organizations like Neighborhood Networks centers.

The City of Chattanooga, TN

A decade ago, Chattanooga – population 150,000 – faced the common litany of urban problems, including crime, unemployment, the outmigration of jobs and a shortage of quality affordable housing. Chattanoogans responded by organizing task forces and small committees to revitalize the city. Their efforts helped Chattanooga become internationally recognized as one of the most improved cities in the 1990s.

Lessons Learned:

- Broad public participation helps identify a wide range of issues and increases creativity in problem-solving.
- Structured committees can accomplish more than individuals working alone.
- Ongoing reassessment of priorities provides focus and keeps programs on track.

Background

To address increasing crime and unemployment, Chattanooga citizens formed a nonprofit organization in the 1980s that operated somewhat like a Neighborhood Networks center. That nonprofit, Chattanooga Venture, expanded community involvement in city issues and gave the city a voice and a vision.

Lesson: Articulate Goals

Chattanooga residents helped the city identify neighborhood goals, raise money for projects and support activities through volunteering.

The first step to get the city on track was to create Vision 2000. Similar in content to the mission statement of many Neighborhood Networks centers, this vision helped residents maintain a disciplined focus on the most important issues, especially affordable housing and jobs.

Chattanooga Venture staff encouraged residents to participate in goal-setting meetings across the city. More than 1,700 people attended public meetings during this five-month process. The high level of participation revealed residents' strong interest in developing solutions to community problems. Participants identified 40 goals to revitalize the city, which included mitigating family violence, renovating historic buildings and cultural attractions, increasing affordable housing, and cleaning up the downtown riverfront.

Lesson: Funding Is Critical

Chattanooga residents found that a little money from the city could be a down payment on projects and that outreach to local organizations generated contributions to cover the expenses of community projects.

The residents who identified the city's goals began working in small groups to achieve these objectives. One task force raised $500,000 from private and public organizations to open a Family Violence Shelter for battered women and their children. Another group raised seed money for a $6 million renovation of the historic Tivoli Theater. The restoration of a local bridge, now the world's longest footbridge, helped bring pedestrian traffic downtown. The city developed

and rehabilitated more than 3,000 affordable housing units.

Just as Neighborhood Networks centers invest a small amount of money in center programs and encourage local organizations to contribute the remaining funds, the City of Chattanooga invested a small amount to accomplish its goals. Nonprofit and for-profit organizations donated additional funds. Chattanooga Venture noted that "for every dollar spent by the public sector, the private sector invested three dollars" on Vision 2000 activities.[5]

Getting Results for Chattanooga

Chattanooga Venture found that people can effectively address issues when they meet in structured groups. Chattanooga Venture helped residents work in small groups to accomplish goals identified in Vision 2000. The task forces and steering committees identified what would be needed to ensure their projects could succeed and then decided whether or not to proceed, expand the project's scope or move in a different direction. Taking time to think through a project in advance saved time and money. The groups determined whether they could find financial and volunteer support to achieve their goals and then decided to create an organization to perform the work. The newly created organizations identified appropriate office space and began to recruit volunteers. Chattanooga Venture continued to provide assistance through each stage of development.

Lesson: Involve Residents on Committees

Residents worked together in small groups to determine projects, identify funding and secure volunteers. Residents offered a neighborhood perspective on whether or not plans could succeed.

Staying on Track

Chattanooga Venture required time and long-term commitments from participants. Goal-setting took five months and many more meetings were required for groups to decide how to accomplish the goals and secure resources and volunteers. Once resources were in place to restore Chattanooga, work progressed slowly, particularly on activities such as restoration of homes and historic buildings.

To help stay on track, the city decided to evaluate its success. In 1993, more than 2,600 residents offered suggestions to issues in five areas: work, government, places, people and play. Each goal included activities to achieve that objective. For example, listed under the goal of "creating a vibrant downtown" were such activities as establishing a public market for farmers, artists and craft vendors; developing an incentive fund to encourage downtown businesses to renovate buildings and improve landscaping; and extending the city shuttle system to the downtown area.[6]

Earning Global Honors

Chattanooga's willingness to involve residents in new ways to improve their city earned the city national and global honors. In 1996, the Together Foundation and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements selected Chattanooga as one of 12 global recipients of the Award Winning Practices in Urban Issues. The jury highlighted three areas in which the city excelled: technology, economic development and environmental management. The Environmental Best Manufacturing Practices program honored the city of Chattanooga for promoting exceptional practices, methods and procedures in planning, production, facilities, and management. HUD also recognized the city's transformation in a publication addressing strategies for community change.[7] Popular media such as *US News and World Report* (June 15, 1998) are also telling the story of the comeback city.

Summary

Chattanooga's community transformation offers lessons for community groups planning change.

- Take time to develop a vision.
- Involve the community in decisionmaking.
- Start with many ideas; then compress them to a few broad priorities.
- Identify actions that can help achieve goals.
- Prepare and share a report on process of identifying goals and implementing programs.
- Create small groups to raise funds and identify steps to achieve each goal.
- Reassess priorities periodically.
- Provide progress reports to the public on achievements.

Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation: Washington, DC

The Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation is a national nonprofit organization that helps revitalize lower-income communities and provide affordable housing for residents. To accomplish this mission, the corporation founded a national network of community-based organizations that work in partnership with residents, businesses, government officials and other organizations to create healthy communities. These local member organizations resemble Neighborhood Networks centers in many respects. Through national and local partnerships, the corporation has helped expand housing and economic development in communities across the country for two decades.

Lessons Learned:

- Clarify the goals of the organization before providing services or products.
- Link goals to resources and proceed according to available resources.
- Form a board and encourage members to take ownership of the organization.

Background

Congress established the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation in 1978 to revive low-income communities and provide affordable housing. The community groups that have joined the Corporation's network are called NeighborWorks®, operating in 565 communities throughout the United States. Based in Washington, D.C., with staff in nine district offices across the country, the corporation provides training, technical assistance and some seed funding to member organizations. Network organizations can apply for small grants from the corporation that often are matched by local governments, businesses and foundations.

The corporation receives annual funding from Congress and receives additional support from foundations with programs at member organization sites.

At the local level, the corporation works with a city or a group of organizations to help defray the costs of starting a NeighborWorks® group. The Corporation commits up to $100,000. This seed money helps fund a local development coordinator and all costs associated with four or five area-wide strategic

planning workshops that result in the creation of a nonprofit organization. Total start-up financing on the local level can average between $200,000 and $300,000.

Lesson: Funding Is Critical

NeighborWorks® organizations rely on seed money from Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation and donations from local government, business and community groups. Local organizations sign financial agreements with partners to ensuring funding is ongoing.

Diverse Boards Are Key To Success

The Corporation encourages member organizations to create resident-led governing boards that include community residents and representatives from government agencies, businesses and community organizations.

These local boards identify priorities and resources, including grants and loans from financial institutions, foundations and other private sources. Public support includes Community Development Block Grant money from HUD and funding from cities and states. In some cases, local government funding for streets and parks helps support neighborhood revitalization.

Lesson: Advisory Committees Help Identify and Achieve Goals

NeighborWorks® groups form advisory boards with residents, government representatives and local businesses or community groups. Board members rely on their professional knowledge and networks to find funding and volunteers.

NeighborWorks® groups work closely with community organizations. Board members rely on their personal and professional networks, as well as research on community assets, to develop partnerships. Partner organizations provide funding, volunteers and resources. NeighborWorks® groups also conduct outreach to residents in the community. Some groups request community volunteers for a neighborhood "cleanup day;" others form committees or hold block-club meetings to discuss timely issues.

Benefits

- **Community**. From 1993 to 1997, the network stimulated community reinvestment of $1.8 billion and helped 83,000 lower-income families purchase or improve their homes.
- **Partners**. Local partners have benefited through increased property values and expanded local economies. National partners have benefited from community development and leadership skills gained from national and local training institutes, publications and other technical assistance materials.
- **NeighborWorks® organizations**. The corporation's annual training institutes and technical assistance resources have enabled local organizations to respond to community housing and development needs. Many groups are now more effective and able to provide greater resources to both partner organizations and residents.

Lessons Learned

George Knight, executive director of Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, offers the following suggestions to help growing organizations:

- Clearly define the group's goals at the outset. Ensure these goals are achievable and within the organization's resources.
- Use appropriate tools to measure progress. For example, the number of new mortgages is a more compelling measurement of success than the number of residents who receive homebuyer counseling.
- Encourage the board of directors, at national and local levels, to exercise ownership of the organization. This group can be a critical source of ideas, funding and partnership opportunities.
- Spend time and resources hiring staff who will help the organization grow.

- ❑ Operate in a businesslike manner, whether or not you make a profit.

Most new organizations attempt to do too much with too few resources, Knight says. The steps to success are not complicated, but require work. Many organizations fall short of their goals when they seek short cuts and avoid follow though. To increase success, newly developing organizations should develop a strategic plan with clear objectives, defining who is responsible for each objective and establishing tools to measure success.

Transferability and Sustainability

The Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation has successfully replicated NeighborWorks® organizations across the country for 20 years. Knight attributes much of the corporation's success to clarity around the organization's goals. The path to achieving these goals can vary widely from organization to organization depending on local needs and resources. In addition to helping train local organizations in how to structure and govern themselves and raise resources, the corporation helps troubleshoot during crisis situations.

Summary

The Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation has helped increase lending to distressed communities across the country through training, technical assistance and funding of local community-based organizations. The following highlights factors contributing to success.

- ❑ Individuals and organizations that are most affected by community actions should be involved in identifying issues and planning activities.
- ❑ A partnership of residents and representatives from the private and public sectors ensures that organizations address a range of needs from diverse perspectives and resources.
- ❑ Devise methods to evaluate all issues important to the organization. That which is not measured is often not perceived as important.
- ❑ Develop evaluation systems early – optimally when creating the organization.

Chapter Four

Resources

Contact Information for Neighborhood Networks Centers

Wheatland Community Learning Center

Contact: Kim Williams, Executive Director
8157 Leigh Ann Drive
Dallas, TX 75232
(972) 224-5243
Fax: (972) 442-9721

Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Community Technology Center

Contact: Elridge Morgan, Director
7923 Martin Luther King Jr. Way S.
Seattle, WA 98118-4344
(206) 722-4665
Fax: (206) 723-6514
website: *http://www.nwlink.com/~mlkapts*

Communities On Line, Inc.

Contact: Angela Wickham, Director Orchard Mews
514 Orchard Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
(410) 523-2021
Fax: (410) 728-1507

Neighborhood Networks Information Center

The Neighborhood Networks Information Center offers a range of materials for free or at a minimal charge. Call toll-free at (888) 312-2743 to request any of the following materials. Order forms are also available for items that require payment. Resources include:

- ❑ **Neighborhood Networks Resource Guide (binder)**. The resource guide offers a step-by-step overview of the stages involved in developing and operating a Neighborhood Networks center. ($20)
- ❑ **Neighborhood Networks Sample Business Plan**. The business plan highlights key points for developing a Neighborhood Networks center, such as objectives, funding sources and timelines. The evaluation provides a format for conducting an annual baseline assessment for each center and showcasing the successes taking place at centers.
- ❑ ***Neighborhood Networks News Brief*** **(current and past issues)**. A quarterly newsletter distributed to the public, HUD field offices and Neighborhood Networks centers
- ❑ ***NNewsline*** **(current and past issues)**. A bimonthly newsletter highlighting topics of interest to Neighborhood Networks Coordinators and centers.
- ❑ **List of Current Neighborhood Networks Centers**. The list includes center names, cities and states.
- ❑ **Fact Sheets**. Fact sheets are one-page documents on topics that include an overview of the initiative and telehealth programs at Neighborhood Networks centers.
- ❑ **Success Stories**. Brief overviews of successful activities at Neighborhood Networks centers across the country.
- ❑ **Program-related News Articles**. Articles in national publications, such as *USA Today*, that describe Neighborhood Networks achievements.
- ❑ **Highlights Video**. A useful presentation tool featuring footage of Neighborhood Networks

activity in Boston, New Orleans and Seattle. 17 minutes ($20)

- ❑ **Media Montage Video**. A highlight of broadcast coverage of Neighborhood Networks activities across the United States. 6 minutes. ($20)
- ❑ **Senior Connection Video**. A great tool for marketing and outreach, this video helps demonstrate how older adults benefit from Neighborhood Networks center activities. 17 minutes ($20)

Organizations

These organizations provide useful resources for those interested in establishing or growing a Neighborhood Networks center.

Accountants for the Public Interest (API). University of Baltimore, Thurnel Business Center, Room 155, 1420 North Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21201 410-837-6533 Fax: 410-837-6532 Website: http://www.accountingnet.com/asso/api. API is a national network of affiliates through which accountants volunteer their expertise to nonprofit organizations, small businesses and individuals who cannot afford professional accounting services. API publishes a series of user-friendly guides for nonprofits on financial topics.

Applied Research and Development Institute. 6740 East Hampden Ave., Suite 311, Denver, CO, 80224 (303) 691-6076 Fax: (303) 691-6077 Website: http://www.ardi.org. The institute's mission is to improve the management and leadership of nonprofit organizations.

National Center for Nonprofit Boards. 2000 L Street, NW, Suite 510, Washington, D.C. 20036-4907, (202) 452-6262 or (800) 883-6262, Fax: (202) 452-6299, Website: http://www.ncnb.org. The National Center for Nonprofit Boards was founded in 1988 by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges and the Independent Sector to help nonprofit organizations design and organize training programs, workshops and conferences for board members and chief executives.

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). 409 Third Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20416, (800) U-ASK-SBA (800-827-5722) Fax: (202) 205-7064 TDD: (704) 344-6640 Website: http://www.sba.gov. The U.S. Small Business Administration provides programs and services to help small businesses develop and grow. SBA offers business counseling and training through a service corps of retired executives (http://www.score.org) and small business development centers across the country. SBA also conducts Tribal Business Information Centers on Native American reservations and the online women's business center (http://www.onlinewbc.org/ for women who own small businesses.

Publications

Building for the Future: A Discussion Paper on Strengthening Staff Leadership in Community-Based Development Organizations, Fannie Mae Foundation, Joseph B. McNeely, Federal National Mortgage Association (FNMA), Washington, D.C., 1993. The paper advocates strengthening and expanding staff leadership in community-based development organizations. Contact the Fannie Mae Foundation at (202) 274-8000.

Classifying 501(c) Nonprofits, Accountants for the Public Interest (API), Washington, D.C. 1994. The guide outlines the characteristics of 501(c)(3) organizations and offers guidance on obtaining IRS recognition of tax-exempt status. Contact the Accountants for the Public Interest listed under "Organizations."

Filing Nonprofit Tax Forms, Accountants for the Public Interest (API), Washington, D.C.,1994. This guide discusses tax-filing requirements for organizations that are tax exempt under 501(c)3) or 501(c)(4). Contact the Accountants for the Public Interest listed under "Organizations."

Foundation Resources Community Networks, Telecenters and Televillages, Timothy Walter, Aspen Institute, Rural Economic Policy Program, July 25, 1996. The document identifies organizations and resources to help organizations fund technology programs, such as those at Neighborhood Networks

center. The document can be downloaded from the Aspen Institute's website at http://www.aspeninst.org/rural/foundres.html.

Fund Raising Made Simple: A Workbook for Small Nonprofits, Ronald J. Meshanko, Lloyd C. Foerster, Washington, D.C., Lutheran Resources Commission, 1992. This manual provides steps to conduct an effective fund raising campaign.

Guide to Estimating Start-up and Administrative Costs of Nonprofit Organizations, Rewritten by Peter Werwath, 1995, from a training manual "Business Planning for Nonprofit Housing Organizations," The Enterprise Foundation and ICF, Inc., 1991. This detailed guide covers specific cost estimates for start-up, overhead (including utilities, insurance and advertising), salaries and fringe benefit costs. The guide is available from the best practice database on The Enterprise Foundation's website at http://www.enterprisefoundation.org.

Guide to Breakeven Analysis for Nonprofit Organizations, Adapted by Peter Werwath (1995) from "Business Planning for Nonprofit Housing Organizations," The Enterprise Foundation and ICF, Inc., 1992. The document helps nonprofits determine whether a business activity will be profitable. The guide is available from the best practice database on The Enterprise Foundation's website at http://www.enterprisefoundation.org.

Guide to Defining and Evaluating a Job, The Enterprise Foundation and ICF Kaiser, Inc., 1996. The guide provides a questionnaire to help organization staff define a new job, redefine an existing one, write a job description and perform salary comparison studies. The guide is available from the best practice database on The Enterprise Foundation's website at http://www.enterprisefoundation.org.

Guide to Developing a Program Marketing Plan, The Enterprise Foundation, 1996. The Enterprise Foundation and ICF, Inc. developed this guide to train staff of nonprofit organizations in business planning. The guide offers advice on writing a marketing plan that includes goals, promotional messages and strategies, program evaluation tools and budget guidance. The guide is available from the best practice database on The Enterprise Foundation's website at http://www.enterprisefoundation.org.

Management and Leadership Resources for Non-Profits, Applied Research and Development Institute, Washington, D.C., Chronicle of Philanthropy. The resource directory identifies books, booklets, pamphlets, bibliographies, audio and videotapes, computer software, training kits and other published materials that can enhance management and leadership needs of nonprofits. Contact the Applied Research and Development Institute listed under "Organizations."

Marketing Nonprofits: A Guide to Fund Raising, The Enterprise Foundation, 1996, adapted from an article by James G. Lord in The Grantsmanship Center News (January 1981). The document offers guidance in public relations and marketing to help support fund-raising efforts of nonprofits. Topics include effective use of audio-visuals and presentation materials; use of the media; the "prospect's kit"; and the use of fund-raising consultants.

Sample Job Descriptions: Board Chair and Board Member, The Enterprise Foundation, 1996. This model is designed for use by nonprofit organizations to determine skills and experience required for board positions. The document is available from the best practice database on The Enterprise Foundation's website at http://www.enterprisefoundation.org.

Social Programs That Work, Jonathan Crane, ed., Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1998. According to the editor, "a number of [social] programs have had a substantial, positive impact on the lives of the people they have served and have benefited society as a whole." This publication highlights some of the best social programs selected by a group of social science researchers and practitioners.

Spotlighting What Works: Award Winning Community Development Practices, Bulletin issued three times a month by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development. Spotlighting

What Works describes best practices in community development nationwide. Many practices have received HUD's John J. Gunther Blue Ribbon Best Practice Award.

Strategic Planning Workbook for Nonprofit Organizations, Bryan W. Barry, Amherst H.Wilder Foundation, St. Paul, Minn., 1986. This step-by-step guide to developing a strategic plan includes an example of a strategic plan and blank worksheets. Contact the Wilder Foundation Publishing Center, 919 Lafond Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55104 (800) 274-6024 or (651) 659-6024 Fax (651) 642-2061 Website: http://www.wilder.org.

What Every Board Member Should Know About America's Nonprofit Sector, National Center for Nonprofit Boards, Washington, D.C., 1994. The publication provides an overview of the nonprofit sector, including a discussion of government/nonprofit partnerships and a section on accountability, legislative, financial and leadership challenges. Contact the National Center for Nonprofit Boards listed under "Organizations."

Websites

Actions Without Borders (http://www.idealist.org). This site provides a searchable database of 10,000 nonprofit websites, nonprofit news sites, jobs and volunteer opportunities, and resources for nonprofit managers. The website helps identify potential partners and funding for centers.

Community Resource Center (http://www.crcamerica.org). The Community Resource Center is a nonprofit organization that provides leadership training, technical assistance and consulting services to community-based organizations in Colorado and throughout the US. The website links to Internet resources for nonprofits.

Enterprise Foundation (http://www.enterprisefoundation.org). The Enterprise Foundation website includes a best practices database with resources for low-income housing and community development organizations. Launched in 1982, The Enterprise Foundation is a national, nonprofit housing and community development organization that assists community-based nonprofit organizations and state and local governments in developing affordable housing and community services.

Fundsnet Online (http://www.fundsnetservices.com/main.htm). The website provides links to fundraising resources categorized by type (education, government, etc.), region and state. The site also includes grant centers.

Guidestar (http://www.guidestar.org). Guidestar provides a free searchable database of reports on the programs and finances of more than 600,000 U.S. charities. The site also features nonprofit news, organization profiles and short articles on giving.

HandsNet (http://www.handsnet.org). HandsNet lists 5,000 public interest and human service agencies and provides nonprofit news, links and nonprofit resources.

Impact Online (http://www.impactonline.org). Impact Online maintains a database of nonprofit organizations and volunteer opportunities. The site also includes information on how to prepare World Wide Web documents (html) and where to find additional online resources for nonprofits.

Innovations in American Government (http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/~innovat/intro.htm). This website highlights the Innovations in American Government award program of the Ford Foundation and Harvard University. The John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard administers the program in partnership with the Council for Excellence in Government. The site lists best practices across the country in capital and environmental services, community services, human services, management and governance, protective services and social services.

Internal Revenue Service's List of Tax-Exempt Organizations (http://www.irs.ustreas.gov). The IRS lists 500,000 tax-exempt organizations and provides nonprofit tax information and downloadable IRS forms.

National Council of Nonprofit Associations (http://www.mncn.org/ncna.htm). This website lists nonprofit associations categorized by state. Listings include contact information and Internet addresses.

Non-profit Nuts & Bolts Online (http://www.nutsbolts.com). This website is a one-stop resource for nonprofits. The site links to organizations that include the Association for Volunteer Administration; Information for Nonprofits offering fundraising and grants information, the National Center for Nonprofit Boards and the U.S. Nonprofit Gateway that describes grants, budget and partnership information. The site also links to nonprofit discussion sites.

Philanthropy Journal Online (http://www.philanthropy-journal.org). The Philanthropy Journal is a monthly publication addressing philanthropy news, issues and organizations. Visitors can search for specific articles that are updated weekly.

Success Profiles (http://www.successprofiles.com). Success Profiles, Inc. is a San Diego, California-based consulting firm that specializes in best practices performance measurement and organizational change management. The website describes the organization's Success Profiles Benchmarking Analysis — a comprehensive performance measurement program that identifies and measures an organization's strongest and weakest business practices.

Support Center for Nonprofit Management (http://www.supportcenter.org). The Support Center for Nonprofit Management is a consulting and training organization whose services are focused in the San Francisco Bay area. The website includes a national network of Support Center affiliates located across the US. The California website includes a searchable database of consultants working with Bay area nonprofits, an online library, fundraising forum, technology help desk and an electronic nonprofit information service with answers to frequently asked questions in nonprofit management.

Together Foundation/ United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (http://www.bestpractices.org). This searchable database includes solutions to common urban problems around the world. The Together Foundation, an official nongovernmental organization (NGO) of the United Nations, and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS- Habitat), established in Nairobi in 1978, have been updating the global database since its creation in 1995.

U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Best Practices (http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ideas/idea_menu.html). The Department of Agriculture hosts this site describing best practices in rural areas across the country. Topic areas include child care, community development, partnership building, job training and social services. The site identifies successful project designs and project management techniques that have succeeded in low-income communities and draws on the experience of community-based organizations.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Best Practices (http://www.hud.gov/ptw/menu.html). HUD maintains this database highlighting the winners of the John J. Gunther Blue Ribbon Best Practice Awards. These awards recognize the very best in housing and community development programs nationwide. The site includes a database with entries on hundreds of award winners.

U.S. Department of Housing's Office of Planning and Community Development (http://www.hud.gov/whatwork.html). HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development maintains this website that links to a range of public, private and nonprofit websites highlighting effective community programs.

Endnotes

[1] Texas has a program that funds child care at full contract rates that low-income parents can access up to 12 months.

[2] Representative from Communities in School, "A Portal to the Future," Wheatland Community Learning Center video, 1997.

[3] "A Portal to the Future," Wheatland Community Learning Center video, 1997.

[4] The Empowerment Through Computers (ETC) project included representatives from nonprofit and for-profit management companies, government housing agencies and local colleges and universities. Working in partnership with property owners, managers, the rehabilitation architect and contractors, ETC helped found the computer center.

[5] *Revision 2000: Take Charge Again*, Revision 2000 magazine designed and produced by Gianni Longo of Urban Initiatives.

[6] *Community with a Vision: Revision 2000*, brochure, May 20, 1993, conceived by Urban Initiatives.

[7] *VISION/REALITY: Strategies for Community Change*, HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development, HUD-1449-CPR, March 1994, p. 56.